

**MINORITY BUSINESS MEETING  
NASA HQ  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1992**

**Good afternoon and welcome to NASA headquarters. It is a pleasure to see this group here today, because we are committed to making NASA's minority contractor community a model for other areas of government and industry to emulate.**

**As a first step in that direction, I'm pleased to announce today that we are setting up a NASA Minority Business Resource Advisory Committee.**

**This Committee will help us identify more businesses that should be a part of the NASA family. I invite you to nominate members for this committee. Send their names to my office within a few weeks, because we're ready to get started.**

**This committee will help disprove the notion that there are no high tech small and disadvantaged businesses. We know they're out there, and we'll find them, and nurture them because we want to work with firms that have the desire to reach for the American Dream.**

**Congress has imposed on NASA an 8 percent goal for contracting to small and disadvantaged businesses, but NASA has upped the ante.**

**Congress did not set a deadline for meeting the goal, but we have imposed one on ourselves: 1994. Between now and the end of fiscal year 94, we plan to offer significant prime and subcontracting opportunities to minority- and woman-owned businesses.**

**In fiscal year 1991, we awarded \$712 million dollars in prime and subcontracts to small and disadvantaged businesses, including woman-owned businesses -- that's 6 percent of NASA's total spending.**

**Just last month, the Kennedy Space Center selected an 8(a) (minority) firm for a \$75 million contract, with options up to \$150 million, for telerobotics and other high tech devices.**

**Meeting our goal will not be easy. But we are committed to it. Among the steps we are taking:**

- o Establishing firm percentages for small and disadvantaged business subcontracting as part of our prime contracts.**

- o Making use of small and disadvantaged business subcontracting as an important evaluation factor in every source selection.**
- o Rewarding prime contractors with special award fees when they exceed their subcontracting goals by certain percentages.**

**The reason this effort is so important to us is that we know that there are a lot of small businesses out there with big ideas. Their employees have the entrepreneurial spirit and can-do attitude that NASA needs if we're going to do things faster, better, and cheaper, and provide technology to benefit the U.S. economy.**

**Small businesses create more than two-thirds of the jobs in this country. That's why NASA is shifting some of our attention away from the aerospace giants. We'll keep working with the big contractors, of course, and help them get more efficient. But we're also going to open up our arms to bring in more small and disadvantaged businesses to take advantage of the full diversity of America.**



**One of the ways to do this is simplify the incredibly complex set of procurement rules that govern contracts valued between \$25,000 and \$500,000. These bewildering rules are as cumbersome for NASA to deal with as they are for small business. Mid-range procurements between \$25,000 and \$500,000 represent only 15 percent of the total dollar value of NASA contracts, but account for over 80 percent of our procurement actions.**

**Buying a relatively simple piece of equipment, or routine support services, should not be governed by all the same complex requirements that apply when we buy something like the space station crew module. Yet, in many cases, the same rules apply.**

**We know small business owners don't have the time or money to jump through all these hoops, so we're working with Congress and the Executive Branch to change it, and give small businesses a chance to compete. We're trying to shrink requests for proposals and contracts from 90 or 100 pages down to ten. We'd like to have electronic bulletin boards so small businesses can dial in and find out about new opportunities.**

**And we want to empower our contracting officers to act so you don't have to go up and down the whole NASA chain to get approval.**

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**Sometimes it's hard, in a period of economic difficulties, to see the practical benefits of investing in space research. But NASA has to continue as a force for innovation, for new technology, so we can offer hope, inspiration, and opportunity to the young people of this country. We benefit from past achievements in space in our daily lives.**

**Now we have to make a new investment for our children's generation so they'll have a better life than us.**

**We need to do more to educate children -- get them interested in math and science. We're doing it and we'll do even more. Children are naturally interested in space. It inspires them to learn. And that's why it's so critically important to have role models like Dr. Mae Jemison, the first African American woman in space. \**

**As we approach the year 2000 -- the dawn of a new century -- it's hard to imagine the future without thinking of new achievements in space. There's so much left to learn; so many places yet to go.**

**And it will be a new NASA that takes us there. A NASA where hispanic engineering students from the University of New Mexico go on to build Space Station Freedom. A NASA where Asian students at Cal Tech plan a probe to the last unexplored planet: far-away Pluto.**

**A NASA where the first flight surgeon on Space Station Freedom is a Morehouse graduate.**

**When I moved into the Administrator's office this year, I found a plaque -- all covered with dust. On that plaque was the Apollo 11 patch, and the signatures of Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Mike Collins. On the top, it's written, "Carried to the Moon aboard Apollo 11. Presented to the Mars 1 crew."**

**Somewhere in America last week, an amazing thing happened. I can't tell you exactly where -- it might have been East St. Louis, or Houston, or Watts. But somewhere, an African American schoolgirl promised herself that she would be on that first flight to Mars.**



**At the big press conference before the flight, they'll ask her if she ever dreamed of becoming the first American to go to Mars. And she'll say, "YES. My dream started in September, 1992, when I saw Mae Jemison fly in space and I knew that in NASA, no dream was too big -- no limit could be placed on what I could accomplish." That is the NASA I want to build. I want your help to do it.**

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**Now I am pleased to recognize two companies who already have demonstrated that they are ready, willing and able to help fulfill that dream.**

**First, I would like to present the 1992 NASA Minority Contractor of the Year Award to Jackson & Tull, Chartered Engineers, of Seabrook, Md., for their outstanding work supporting Goddard Space Flight Center's Engineering Directorate. Is Knox Tull here to accept the award? \\\**

**And, I am happy to present  
NASA's 1992 Minority  
Subcontractor of the Year to  
B & W Services of Bay St. Louis,  
Miss., for their work above and  
beyond the call of duty providing  
custodial support services for  
Johnson Controls over nearly 2  
million square feet of space at our  
Stennis Space Center. Is George  
Watson here to accept the award?**